
NORTHERN HIGHLAND AMERICAN LEGION STATE FOREST



NORTHERN HIGHLAND-AMERICAN LEGION STATE FOREST

DRAFT MASTER PLAN AND ENVIRON- MENTAL IMPACT STATEMENT

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**Wisconsin Department of Natural Resources
Division of Forestry**

101 South Webster Street
PO Box 7921
Madison, Wisconsin 53707-7921

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This plan has been developed through a team effort by many individuals from the Department of Natural Resources. Through their hard work and expertise, these people have developed a plan that will guide the Northern Highland-American Legion State Forest into the future.

Core Planning Team

Bob Dall, Angela Jacobs, Dennis Leith, Melissa Lake, Teague Prichard, James Warren, Tom Watkins, Linda Winn.

Past Members: Dave Daniels, Lorelee Bernsteen, Jill Mrotek, Arlyn Loomans, Connie Antonuk, Mary Hamel, Andena Rissman, Kent VanHorn

Guidance Team

Tim Mulhern, Robert Mather, Kate Fitzgerald, Michael Staggs

Past members: Gene Franciso, Bob Roden, Dale Urso, Bruce Moss, Paul DeLong, Al Shea

Expanded Team

Ron Eckstein, Steve Gilbert, Laura Herman, Randy Hoffman, Sonja Margitan, Colleen Matula, Patricia Matula, Jeff Olsen, Mike Vogelsang, Bob Schepper, Cal Doering, Mike Beaufeaux, Rebecca Schroeder, Harland Carlson

Other Resources Specialists

Paul Schultz, Heide Conde, Dan Jacoby, Anthony Martinez, Mark Brandt, Dean Farr, Lyle Hannahs, Bill Eldred, Ken Markart, Sherry Klosiewski, Sherri Buller, Jim Bishop, Dave Kunelius, Dave Daniels, Dan Schuller, Jimmy Christianson, Eric Ebersberger



LETTER FROM PROPERTY SUPERINTENDENT

Wisconsinites care deeply about the current and future use of public forests in Wisconsin. The Northern Highland-American Legion (NH-AL) State Forest is no exception. As the largest state-owned property, the NH-AL is a vast and cherished part of Wisconsin's ecological, economic and social past, present and future. The NH-AL State Forest covers 225,000 acres located in northern Wisconsin in Vilas, Oneida and Iron counties.

This draft NH-AL master plan is designed to inform both general and technical readers about the future use and management of the forest. The department is committed to working with citizens and businesses alike to manage Wisconsin's state forests in a sustainable manner for current and future generations—an approach that incorporates ecological, economic and social values. I hope the information and vision in this plan will encourage enthusiasm and constructive discussion.

The NH-AL state forest is important to many people because it has the unique ability to meet many different needs. The forest generates employment and supports the economic well being of rural and urban communities alike, through the production of forest products we use daily and the recreation and tourism generated by the fantastic forest and lakes setting within the forest. The forest provides opportunities for a diverse array of recreation such as hiking, snowmobiling, biking and hunting, as well as the opportunity to simply sit quietly and enjoy its natural beauty. In addition, the forest cleans our air and water, provides habitat for a wide range of plant and animal species, and helps us sustain our quality of life.

Virtually all elements of the forest have seen increasing demands in the last decade—demands for ecological protection, forest production, and recreation activity. These demands have potential positive impacts—if development and use is properly planned and managed. Unplanned use and management could, however, overwhelm the Northern Highland-American Legion State Forest's unique ability to provide the ecological, economic, and social benefits that are so highly valued by current residents, visitors, and businesses.

How is it possible to understand all of the various dimensions of the NH-AL and meet the increasing demands? What is the future of the forest and what policies will ensure its long-term sustainability?

The Department of Natural Resources, in partnership with Wisconsin citizens, businesses and visitors, provides this plan as the basis for that discussion and the future use and management of the Northern Highland-American Legion State Forest.

Your feedback on the plan is welcomed and encouraged. With over 225,000 acres of land in the heart of the "Northwoods", Wisconsinites have a real opportunity to contribute to sustainable forestry. Together we can ensure that the NH-AL State Forest continues to provide ecological, economic and social benefits to future generations.



Dennis Leith
State Forest Superintendent

NORTHERN HIGHLAND-AMERICAN LEGION STATE FOREST: MASTER PLAN

TABLE OF CONTENTS

ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS	page	a
LETTER FROM PROPERTY SUPERINTENDENT	page	b
CHAPTER 1. Introduction	page	1
CHAPTER 2. The Plan	page	9
Vision and Goals	page	9
Overview of the Forest	page	10
General Land and Forest Management Provisions	page	11
General Forest Management Prescriptions, by Primary Forest Type	page	13
Land Management Areas	page	16
Forest Production Management Area	page	18
Area 1: Winegar Moraines	page	20
Area 2: Manitowish Peatlands	page	24
Area 3: Vilas Sandy Plains North	page	28
Area 4: Vilas Sandy Plains Central	page	32
Area 5: Big Arbor Vitae Loamy Hills	page	36
Area 6: Oneida Sandy Plains	page	40
Habitat Management Area	page	44
Area 7: Ruffed Grouse Demonstration Areas	page	46
Native Community Management Areas	page	50
Area 8: Lake Laura Loamy Hills	page	52
Area 9: Hemlock Hardwoods	page	56
Area 10: Peatland Wetlands	page	64
Area 11: Red and White Pine	page	74
Area 12: Mixed Forest	page	84
Area 13: Special Aquatic	page	92
Area 14: Johnson lake Barrens	page	102
Scenic Management Areas	page	106
Area 15: Manitowish River	page	108
Area 16: Rustic Road	page	112
Wild Resource Area	page	116
Area 17: Manitowish Wild Resource Area	page	118
Special Management Areas	page	122
Area 18: Trout Lake Administration	page	124
Area 19: Woodruff Administration	page	128
Recreation Management Areas	page	130
Area 20: Crystal Lake	page	132
Area 21: Bittersweet Prong	page	136
Area 22: Clear Lake	page	140
Lakes Overlay Zone	page	144
Wildlife Management	page	153
Fisheries Management	page	156
Recreation Management	page	158
Road Management Plan	page	170
Non-Metallic Mining	page	172
Real Estate Management	page	173
Administration and Operations Provision	page	175

CHAPTER 3.	page	181
Background and Affected Environment		
APPENDIX	page	205
Appendix A: Glossary of Terms	page	206
Appendix B: References	page	208
Appendix C: Comparison of the general ecological attributes provided under each Land Management Classification	page	214
Appendix D: Species of Special Concern, Wisconsin State Threatened and Wisconsin State Endangered Species within the Northern Highland-American Legion State Forest	page	216
Appendix E: State Natural Areas (SNAs)	page	218
Appendix F: Natural Resources Used by Local Native American Tribes	page	225
Appendix Maps	page	227

LIST OF FIGURES

CHAPTER 1

None

CHAPTER 2

Figure 2.1 Current Cover Types on the Northern American Legion State Forest

CHAPTER 3

Fig 3.1 Natural Plant Communities on the NH-AL

Fig 3.2 Plant Community Types on State-owned Lands in the NH-AL

Fig 3.3 Age of Forested Plant Communities

Fig 3.4 Stream Classifications on the NH-AL

Fig 3.5 NH-AL Annual Timber and Recreation Revenue, 1997-2001

Fig 3.6 Comparison of Census Results, March 2000

Fig 3.7 NH-AL State Forest Camping and Picnic Facilities

Fig 3.8 NH-AL State Forest Designated Trails



LIST OF TABLES

CHAPTER 1

None

CHAPTER 2

Table 2.1 Area 1 – Winegar Moraines, Current and desired future conditions for community types in acres and percent of total.

Table 2.2 Area 2 – Manitowish Peatlands, Current and desired future conditions for community types in acres and percent of total.

Table 2.3 Area 3 – Vilas Sandy Plains North, Current and desired future conditions for community types in acres and percent of total.

Table 2.4 Area 4 – Vilas Sandy Plains Central, Current and desired future conditions for community types in acres and percent of total.

Table 2.5 Area 5 – Big Arbor Vitae Loamy Hills, Current and desired future conditions for community types in acres and percent of total.

Table 2.6 Area 6 – Oneida Sandy Plains, Current and desired future conditions for community types in acres and percent of total.

Table 2.7 Area 7 – Ruffed Grouse Demonstration Area, Current and desired future conditions for community types in acres and percent of total.

Table 2.8 Area 8 – Lake Laura Loamy Hills, Current and desired future conditions for community types in acres and percent of total.

Table 2.9 Area 9 – Hemlock/Northern Hardwood, Current and desired future conditions for community types in acres and percent of total.

Table 2.10 Area 10 – Peatland/Wetlands, Current and desired future conditions for community types in acres and percent of total.

Table 2.11 Area 11 – Red and White Pines, Current and desired future conditions for community types in acres and percent of total.

Table 2.12 Area 12 – Mixed Forest, Current and desired future conditions for community types in acres and percent of total.

Table 2.13 Area 13 – Special Aquatic, Current and desired future conditions for community types in acres and percent of total.

Table 2.14 Area 14 – Johnson Lake Barrens, Current and desired future conditions for community types in acres and percent of total.

Table 2.15 Area 17 – Manitowish River Wilderness, Current and desired future conditions for community types in acres and percent of total.

Table 2.16 Area 20 – Crystal Lake, Current and desired future conditions for community types in acres and percent of total.

Table 2.17 Area 21 – Bittersweet, Current and desired future conditions for community types in acres and percent of total.

Table 2.18 Area 22 – Clear Lake, Current and desired future conditions for community types in acres and percent of total.

Table 2.19 Wilderness Lakes Overlay Zone, List of Designated Wilderness Lakes

Table 2.20 Wild Lakes Overlay Zone, List of Designated Wild Lakes

Table 2.21 Scenic Lakes Overlay Zone, List of Scenic Lakes

Table 2.22 Modern Family Campgrounds

Table 2.23 Rustic Family Campgrounds

Table 2.24 Primitive Camping

Table 2.25 Group Campgrounds

Table 2.26 Day Use Areas

Table 2.27 Non-Motorized Trail Use

Table 2.28 Motorized Trail Use

Table 2.29 Boat Landing Type

Table 2.30 NH-AL Leased Land Agreements

Table 2.31 Summary of Acreage for Non-motorized Recreation Lands

Table 2.32 Summary of Non-motor and Electric Motor Lake Designation

Table 2.33 NH-AL Designated Non-motor and Electric Motor Lake

CHAPTER 3

Table 3.1 Natural Plant Communities on the NH-AL

Table 3.2 Plant Community Types on State-owned Lands in the NH-AL

Table 3.3 Age of Forested Plant Communities

Table 3.4 Stream Classification in the NH-AL

Table 3.5 NH-AL Annual Timber and Recreation Revenue, 1997-2001.

Table 3.6 Comparison of Census Results, March 2000

Table 3.7 NH-AL State Forest camping and picnic facilities

Table 3.8 NH-AL State Forest Designated Trails (Length in miles)

LIST OF MAPS

- Map 1: Forest Production Management Classification Areas
- Map 2: Area 1, Winegar Morains, Forest Production Management
- Map 3: Area 2 -Manitowish Peatlands, Forest Production Management
- Map 4: Area 3 - Vilas Sandy Plains North, Forest Production Management
- Map 5: Area 4 – Vilas Sandy Plains Central, Forest Production Management
- Map 6: Area 5 – Big Arbor Vitae Loamy Hills, Forest Production Management
- Map 7: Area 6– Oneida Sandy Plains, Forest Production Management
- Map 8: Habitat Management Classification Areas
- Map 9: Area 7 – Ruffed Grouse Demonstration Areas, Habitat Management
- Map 10: Native Community Management Classification Areas
- Map 11: Area 8 – Lake Laura Loamy Hills, Native Community Management
- Map 12: Area 9 – Hemlock/Northern Hardwood Native Community Management
- Map 13: Area 9 – Hemlock/Northern Hardwood Native Community Management: Catherine Lake, N. Bass Lake West, & Plunkett Lake
- Map 14: Area 9 – Hemlock/Northern Hardwood Native Community Management: Sweeney Lake & Tomahawk Lake Hardwoods
- Map 15: Area 9 – Native Community Management: Jute Lake Site
- Map 16: Area 10 - Peatland Wetlands, Native Community Management
- Map 17: Area 10 - Peatland Wetlands, Native Community Management: Dupage Lake & Toy Lake Swamp
- Map 18: Area 10 - Peatland Wetlands, Native Community Management: Rice Lake Complex
- Map 19: Area 10 - Peatland Wetlands, Native Community Management: Aurora Lake Wetlands
- Map 20: Area 10 - Peatland Wetlands, Native Community Management: Trout Lake Conifer
- Map 21: Area 10 - Peatland Wetlands, Native Community Management: Rainbow Wetlands & Big Swamp
- Map 22: Area 11 – Red & White Pine, Native Community Management
- Map 23: Area 11 – Red & White Pine, Native Community Management: Papoose Creek
- Map 24: Area 11 – Red & White Pine, Native Community Management: High Lake
- Map 25: Area 11 – Red & White Pine, Native Community Management: Camp Lake and Pines
- Map 26: Area 11 – Red & White Pine, Native Community Management: Mud Creek Springs and Buffalo Lake
- Map 27: Area 11 – Red & White Pine, Native Community Management: Swanson Lake and Pines and Stone Lake Pines
- Map 28: Area 11 – Red & White Pine, Native Community Management: Helen Lake
- Map 29: Area 12 – Mixed Forest, Native Community Management
- Map 30: Area 12 – Mixed Forest, Native Community Management: Lost Canoe Lake, Allequash Lake & Trout Lake West
- Map 31: Area 12 – Mixed Forest, Native Community Management: Big Arbor Vitae – Mann Lake, Mann Lake North & Carroll Lake West
- Map 32: Area 12– Mixed Forest, Native Community Management: Two Lakes Pine and Oak Forest
- Map 33: Area 13 – Special Aquatic, Native Community Management
- Map 34: Area 13 – Special Aquatic, Native Community Management: Sherman Lake
- Map 35: Area 13- Special Aquatic, Native Community Management: Manitowish River, Day Lake & Trout River
- Map 36: Area 13– Special Aquatic, Native Community Management: Garland & Salsich Creeks, Goodyear Springs, Partridge Connection and Nixon Lake
- Map 37: Area 13– Special Aquatic, Native Community Management: Devine & Mishonagan Creeks and Black Tern Bog
- Map 38: Area 13– Special Aquatic, Native Community Management: Wind Pudding Lake
- Map 39: Area 13– Special Aquatic, Native Community Management: Shallow Lake
- Map 40: Area 14- Johnson Lake Barrens, Native Community Management: Johnson Creek and Pines, and Johnson Lake and Barrens
- Map 41: Scenic Management Classification Areas
- Map 42: Area 15 – Manitowish River, Scenic Management
- Map 43: Area 16- Rustic Road, Scenic Management
- Map 44: Wild Resources Management Classification Area
- Map 45: Area 17- Manitowish River Wild Resource, Wild Resource Management
- Map 46: Special Management Classification Areas
- Map 47: Area 18: Trout Lake Administration, Special Management
- Map 48: Area 19: Woodruff, Administration and Fish Hatchery Special Management
- Map 49: Recreation Management Classification Areas
- Map 50: Area 20- Crystal Lake, Recreation Management
- Map 51: Area 21- Bittersweet, Recreation Management-
- Map 52: Area 22- Clear Lake, Recreation Management
- Map 53: Wilderness Lakes Management Zone
- Map 54: Wild Lakes Management Zone
- Map 55: Scenic Lakes Management Zone

APPENDIX

Map 56: Land Management Classification
Map 57: Land Management Areas
Map 58: Existing and Proposed State Natural Areas
Map 59: Passive Management Land Use Areas
Map 60: Lakes with Special Use Designation
Map 61: Boundary Expansion
Map 62: Existing and Proposed Recreation
Map 63: Current Boat Landings and Canoe Routes
Map 64: Semi-Remote Areas

